

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Spacesaver Corporation

Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Spacesaver Corporation Discovers That Maintenance Saves Money

Client Profile:

Spacesaver Corporation, based in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, manufactures high-density storage solutions such as mobile and stationery shelving systems for the legal, healthcare, library, museum, business, and governmental sectors. This year, Spacesaver Corporation's 475 employees helped celebrate the company's thirtieth anniversary.

Situation:

Spacesaver's main production line, a highly automated coil feed line and one of the core processes on the shop floor, made every day a challenge at Spacesaver. Because the machine is older, it isn't consistent or capable of responding quickly enough, and productivity suffered as a result. The company wanted to replace its equipment, but a full replacement, with retooling and automation, required a capital expenditure of \$750,000 to \$1 million. After the line went down for three weeks straight, the company consulted the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for guidance.

Solution:

WMEP recommended that Spacesaver implement two total productive maintenance (TPM) projects focused on training and equipment analysis. WMEP provided TPM training to select Spacesaver employees, and a team of 20 people began the first project. They discovered that, although the machine was supposed to run 50 percent of the time, 40 percent of that time was consumed by idling and minor stoppages, breakdowns, setups, and adjustments. A total of seven people were trained to work on the line, and each operator had a unique system for adjusting the machine.

Spacesaver's second TPM project focused on solving the problems identified on the line. Using the operator adjustment reports as guidelines, the team determined what really needed adjusting and when, and standardized the process so that all seven operators had a consistent procedure for adjusting the machine. The team still keeps these reports as a reference log to troubleshoot problems. Thanks to daily standardized maintenance, Spacesaver has eliminated emergency maintenance on the line and can predict and prevent the daily problems that inhibit production. Productivity has increased by 30 percent since this process has been put into place, and overtime costs have been dramatically reduced. Best of all, Spacesaver avoided the nearly \$1 million

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equipment replacement cost, and can now focus on production.

Results:

Increased productivity by 30 percent.

Eliminated emergency maintenance on the machine.

Significantly reduced setup time, stoppages, and idling time.

Reduced overtime costs.

Saved \$750,000 to \$1 million in replacement costs.

Testimonial:

“We’re high-speed production, and we probably paint around 1.1 million parts per month after the part is fabricated. After [working with the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership to implement] TPM, our productivity for parts produced each day increased by 30 percent.”

Jim Heathman, Plant Manager